

News Release

November 7, 2006

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Sacramento District
Public Affairs Office
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916-557-5101

Corps issues Declaration of Emergency for 24 new levee erosion sites

Due to the severe damage identified in late September at 24 levee sites on the Sacramento River and some of its tributaries, the Army Corps of Engineers' Sacramento District has issued a Declaration of Emergency to expedite repair of the sites.

In his Declaration of Emergency, Colonel Ron Light, commander of the Corps' Sacramento District, stated that the damages at 24 sites along the Sacramento and Bear rivers, Cache Creek, Steamboat Slough, and Sutter Slough are severe enough to constitute an imminent threat to the people who live behind these levees.

"Our number one concern is protecting people," Light said. "This declaration allows us to do that as quickly as possible while still meeting our environmental responsibilities."

Many of the areas protected by these levees include communities which range in population from a few thousand to over 1 million. They include West Sacramento, Natomas, Nicolaus, the Sacramento Pocket Area, Clarksburg, and Knights Landing.

The Declaration of Emergency enables the Army Corps of Engineers and California Department of Water Resources to begin repairs while concurrently completing the environmental assessments and mitigation plans. This allows the repairs to begin in mid-November instead of in mid-January.

The Department of Water Resources is responsible for repairs on 10 of the sites and will start construction in mid-November. The Corps is responsible for repairs on the remaining 14 sites and expects to begin construction in mid-December. The Corps and the Department of Water Resources will do the work in two stages. The first will be to restore the levees' flood protection capability. Once they complete restoring the flood protection, crews will begin environmental mitigation work on the levees.

The 24 sites are spread out over the Sacramento River basin. They are along the Bear River near its confluence with the Feather River, Cache Creek downstream of Yolo, Steamboat Slough upstream of its confluence with the Sacramento River, Sutter Slough near the Sutter Island Cross Road, and the Sacramento River at various sites from Isleton to Natomas.

These 24 sites are in addition to the 33 sites repaired over the course of the summer and fall as well as 47 other sites at which the Corps and the Department of Water Resources are making repairs under the Corps' emergency authority, Public Law 84-99. Altogether, there are 71 new critical sites which the Corps and state have targeted for immediate repair.

"We have coordinated our actions with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries, the White House Council on Environmental Quality, and the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works. They all appreciate the situation and are fully cooperating in support of this action," said Colonel Light.

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